

**CALIFON BOROUGH PLANNING/ZONING BOARD
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 24, 2021
7:30 PM**

Topic: February Planning/Zoning Board meeting

Time: Feb 24, 2021 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89150049584?pwd=UW5Ua1BqTmgva2NiTkpjYVloWnRldz09>

Meeting ID: 891 5004 9584

Passcode: 823476

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,89150049584#,,,,*823476# US (Chicago)

+16468769923,,89150049584#,,,,*823476# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 891 5004 9584

Passcode: 823476

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89150049584?pwd=UW5Ua1BqTmgva2NiTkpjYVloWnRldz09>

**CALIFON BOROUGH PLANNING/ZONING BOARD
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 24, 2021
7:30 PM**

1. Chairman Arthur Owens called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

2. OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Adequate notice of this meeting of the Califon Planning and Zoning Board was given as required by the "Open Public Meetings Act" as follows: notice was sent to the Hunterdon Review and the Hunterdon Democrat, posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building and posted on the Borough website and filed with the Borough Clerk. The Planning and Zoning Board will hold a regular meeting by web-based platform providing remote access as the meeting will be open to the public remotely. Details for public participation will be posted on the website at califonboro.org Public can register at Zoom.us and to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89150049584?pwd=UW5Ua1BqTmgva2NiTkpjYVloWnRldz09>
WEBINAR ID: 891 5004 9584

In the event any member of the public cannot access the public file documents or exhibits, and/or cannot access the Zoom web-based virtual meeting room, they may contact the Board Secretary at kbrown@califonboro.net

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG: Chairman Owens led the meeting in the flag salute

4. ROLL CALL

Mayor Daniel- present
Thomas Bedell-present
Mary Phillips-present
John Lynch-present

Leo Janas- joined meeting at 7:35
Gill Smith- present
Arthur Owens-present

Also present: Jonathan Testa, Board Attorney James Kyle, Board Planner
Kerry Brown, Recording Secretary, and all members of the environmental commission.

5. MINUTES

A. **January 27, 2021, Minutes.** The chairman asked if anyone had corrections. Art Owens stated that he found a couple of small changes and Kerry Brown confirmed she made the changes.

Motion to adopt: Tom Bedell **Second:** John Lynch

Roll Call: Mayor Daniel- abstain
Thomas Bedell- yes
Mary Phillips-abstain
John Lynch-yes

Leo Janas- absent
Gill Smith- abstain
Arthur Owens- yes

6. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion regarding creation of Open Space and Recreation Plan as well as Reexamination of the Master Plan: By creating the open space and recreation plan we will then be able to access some open space money thru the county as well as grants.

Mary Philips stated that there are many subdivision easements that were created because of approving subdivisions however many of these easements are not accessible to the public. She questioned as to weather or not this type of things will be rolled into an open space plan.

Jim Kyle stated that typically one of the key elements of the plan will be the open space systems map. We have all the tax parcel information in GIS. The county has a robust database of the open space properties already. So, part of the planning process is to identify where these properties are and explore Items such as, where would we want to put a trail or which properties should be considered for public access. The mapping is a great visual tool.

There was a question from the board as to what constitutes open space. Jim Kyle explained that any property that is purchased with public money must be accessible to the public. But then there are things like schools, Municipal building etc. that are accessible to the public. There are also land conservancies which are not publicly owned however can be accessed by the public. Any municipal park which was purchased using green acres funding must be publicly accessible.

Art Owens stated that an example of municipally owned property is the piece of land between Academy and Main Street. The borough obtained this utilizing township money as well as money from a couple of other sources. Mayor Daniel confirmed that the township owns this with another entity. They are 50/50 partners.

Jim Kyle stated that a lot of the policies, statements, mapping etc. have already been pulled together by the county so we don't have to do all of the work from scratch. With a modest effort we will be able to pull together a good open space plan with what has already been created.

A question was asked if we had a budget for the creation of this plan. Art Owens stated that this would be coming up under the review of the Master Plan and that we would also be getting some money from the Highlands council as well.

Jim Kyle said he spoke to Herb August with the Highlands council, and we have to go back to see what tasks we must first need to complete. Once we complete the tasks, we can then reallocate the remaining money to a couple of different tasks. Mr. August said that there is also about \$50-100,000 that has not yet been allocated to any specific municipality so if we work together quickly and provide scoping documents, they will likely be able to provide additional funding to us. We have about \$50,000 left in our existing grant agreement. The goal is to get the highlands council to pay for as much as possible.

A question was raised regarding as to where the township stands with the property surrounding the park. It was stated that this was an initiative that the Environmental Commission picked up. They engaged with the county almost two years ago to start conversations. At this point they are trying to negotiate a transfer. They were told by the county attorneys that it simply wasn't on the counties

radar as a priority. The EC is working thru it, they are wondering if having an Open space plan will be beneficial in getting this transfer going.

Jim Kyle shared the counties map of Califon which shows open space and the members reviewed it. The good thing about this is it shows possible external connections outside the borough for open space. Charlie Daniel pointed out the Hoffman Park property that goes into Tewksbury as an example.

Jim Kyle stated that generally in order to go for funding you need to have a plan on file. There are many partners that will cost share.

A question was raised by the board regarding who does the planning long term. Jim Kyle explained that there are a couple of components to the Open space and recreation plan. The first is acquisition of land for active or passive recreation and the second is actual recreation. An assessment will be made regarding the needs of these programs. There are national recreation standards that look at population. The board asked if this was done by referendum, or committees etc. Jim Kyle explained that it is done by the Land Use Board. The land use board can certainly involve the environmental commission, the township committee, or any other agency that they choose to engage to provide input. Anyone who attends a public meeting has the right to provide input. Jim Kyle stated that the LUB can conduct joint meetings, public forums, etc. There are a number of ways to get perspective from the public or other entities.

It was mentioned by the board that Califon doesn't have a lot of open space. So, what is the purpose of this plan. Jim Kyle said that exploring active recreation goals would be something that can be looked at. We could utilize the open space funds to build a soccer field or a baseball field.

Mayor Daniel stated that we have some nice pieces of land that were purchased with the Water Authority, our agreement is that it remains passive recreation. Could we possibly put some trails on that land with the open space money? Jim Kyle responded that most likely this could be done.

Jennifer Gross from the environmental commission suggested that we may use some of the open space to create pollinator corridors. To create areas not only for human use but also for animals to safely move thru.

Jim Kyle said that we will talk about the conservation elements. We could define environmental conservation areas vs. recreation areas.

Mayor Daniel briefly discussed the fact that the township needs to spend the money on these plans first and then gets reimbursed. Jim Kyle said that his office will help to create a detailed scope of work with cost estimate which would then be submitted to the highlands for approval. The township would pay for the services and then get reimbursed by the highlands.

Jim Kyle asked if the board had discussed how they want to proceed with the reexamination. If they want to do a comprehensive report or if they want to look into specific goals and objectives or, land use plan element etc. Art Owens stated that the board had not discussed it however he would like to look into the items discussed in this meeting; the land use element, recreational use etc.

Jim Kyle explained that the open space and recreation plan is a stand-alone plan. We can pull elements from the conservation plan or other elements from the master plan however it is really a stand-alone plan. The reexamination report needs to be completed every ten years. We can also structure this report where it acts as an amendment to the land use plan, if it is formatted correctly

and meets all of the requirements. If we don't believe much has changed, we can simply review all of our ordinances in the process to see if there are areas that are a problem.

Mary Philips stated that we should look critically at the county map and see if the function follows the form. And determine what is doable. She felt that a comprehensive trail system would be great however unless you include the environmental easements which buffer certain subdivisions it may be difficult except along the river and that already exists with the trail system.

Art Owens said it may be good to add another access between river road and the trail (Hoffman Parcel) relatively close to the overlook that the mayor spoke about. Charlie Daniel said that Guy Wilson was trying to place a trail on top of the ridge. He worked to try to purchase some properties for sale in that area however it didn't work out due to difficulty getting easements from neighbors.

John Collins thanked the board for hearing the Environmental Commission out on this matter. The LUB asked if the environmental commission had any specific ideas regarding the Open space and recreation plan. John Collins mentioned that they had met with some members of the recreation committee and there were some items specifically surrounding Island Park. Possibly enhancing some of the trails, some interest in a walking trail around the park, work on the old pond. He also mentioned some members had mentioned Fireman's field.

Art Owens asked if there is money available for forest management. Jim Kyle said that he would research this. He felt that we could be possibly find funding for this. Weather we could use open space fund money depends on how the referendum was worded. Mayor Daniel said that they had already partnered with the Water Supply Authority to take a lot of the ash trees down.

There was further discussion regarding the ash trees. There is some funding available, and it may be beneficial to have a forestry management plan.

Leo Janas commended the environmental commission for being so active.

Art Owens thanked the environmental commission for coming to the meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Tom Bedell Second: Art Owens

Meeting adjourned at 8:17pm

Prepared by Catherine Innella Planning/Zoning Board Secretary

Catherine Innella

Date Approved 7-21-21